



3rd January 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

When I welcome groups of schoolchildren into church, part of my talk to them usually turns to the kneelers in front of them, and what they are used for. The children often then like to kneel on them, and when our session ends with prayers I encourage them to do that. Yet that is not a posture very often adopted by regular members of the congregation nowadays.

When the Magi found the infant Jesus, they knelt to worship. It's a posture that speaks of submission, of metaphorically placing ourselves at the feet of the cross. The position of our body and legs is an external sign, but it is the submissive approach of our hearts before the Lord which matters so much more.

These Magi, those important, wealthy, wise men knelt before the humble young infant. They had probably travelled thousands of miles, a journey taking many weeks, and no doubt costing a great deal, because they were searching a new king. They have followed this star all the way from home, so they continue to follow where it leads them, to this moment when they encounter Jesus. And they recognise in this Christ-child someone who is to be revered and honoured, to be worshipped and adored. They look beyond the external features of the small, weak infant, in his mother's arms, to something far, far greater.

And their worship of him changes things forever. It was the beginning of a change brought for the whole world, but it also had personal implications for those Magi. That

encounter changed them, and it also changed their approach to God, their attitude to what Herod was saying to them, their plans for the journey their life would take from then on, had been utterly transformed. Worship transforms. It transforms individuals, and it transforms the wider world.

I believe the transformative power of that Epiphany moment for the Magi came not just because they were there, and saw the infant Jesus. Worship is not of any value if we only sit in a pew and allow it to happen around us. It was the involvement of the Magi, in kneeling submissively, and in giving to the infant Jesus, that I believe makes the difference. In our worship – as we pray, as we engage with Scripture, as we receive holy sacraments, as we join with others in praise – it is not just a matter of 'being there' that matters, it is our attitude, our inner intentions, that really count.

As the carol 'In the bleak midwinter' says, "What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man I would do my part, yet what I can I give him, give my heart." Surely we agree that we are to give our hearts to God? Let us therefore ensure we give everything of our hearts and our lives to God: that means not only sentiment, but also money, time, effort and attention. And if we do that, we will find that God has changed us and is at work in us, so we become more like He wants us to be, to the praise and glory of His name.

Yours in Him,

Tina



NOTICES

Holy Trinity Blacon are the living church of our living God, and we continue to be at work here! If you are able, do check the parish website www.holytrinityblacon.org (especially the Coronavirus Support page) or our Facebook page (holytrinityblacon) for updates.

TIER 4 RESTRICTIONS affect much of our lives, but fortunately we can still continue to meet (socially distanced) in church to worship together, and we will continue as before meeting at 9.30am each Sunday. The minibus will be running as before, so do let us know if you would like a lift in it.

PRAYING FOR BLACON Louise and Tina are taking our exercise particularly along those streets we are praying for each week. Do join us in praying for those residents. *This week we are praying for: Norris Road, Trinity Gardens, Lynwood Road, Burton Road and Norman Way.*

EVENING PRAYER We meet each Wednesday 5pm for Evening Prayer on Zoom. Do let us know if you would like the link – everyone is welcome to join us.

BIBLE GROUP Our weekly Bible Study group will continue to look at the letter to the Philippians through January. We meet on Zoom weekly from this Thursday 7th Jan at 7.30pm. You are very welcome to join us, please do contact us for the link.

THANK YOU to everyone who gave of their time in the lead up to Christmas, enabling us to deliver Christmas Dinners to over 470 people. The families who received meals on 22nd December also received (thanks to generous grants from Westminster Foundation, Chester Bluecoat Charity and Welcome Network) a hamper of festive goodies, plus children’s activities. We couldn’t have done this without our small army of volunteer bag packers and drivers – thank you!

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